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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 001542

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, EUR/RPM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2014

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [BA](#) [MEPP](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: BAHRAIN AND NEXT STEPS ON NATO'S ISTANBUL
COOPERATION INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 206678

Classified by Charge d'Affaires Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (C) Pol/Econ Chief met with MFA Under Secretary Shaikh Abdul Aziz Al Khalifa October 4 to discuss NATO Deputy Secretary General Alessandro Rizzo's one-day visit to Bahrain

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and NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). While noting that the GOB had not yet developed a detailed position regarding its participation in the ICI, Al Khalifa said that Bahrain was looking forward to enhanced cooperation between Bahrain and NATO under the initiative. He stated that King Hamad had repeatedly called for closer ties between GCC countries and NATO, and the GOB would encourage its fellow GCC members to participate in the ICI.

[12.](#) (U) The English-language daily Bahrain Tribune October 3 published a half-page interview with Rizzo in which he explains the ICI and NATO's history and policies. He is quoted as saying, "Bahrain's favorable response to the NATO initiative to promote closer cooperation with countries in the Broader Middle East denotes its high-level commitment to international peace, stability and security." The paper also publishes a long fact sheet taken directly from the NATO website describing the ICI.

[13.](#) (C) Post spoke with an officer at the British Embassy, per reftel. The British Embassy did not receive instructions to discuss the issue with the GOB. The contact noted the positive press reports of the visit and commented that pinning down the details of GOB participation in the ICI would likely take some time.

ZIADEH